

## **ATTACHMENT 4.10**

### **Comprehensive System of Personnel Development**

This attachment describes the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation's (USOR) policies, procedures, and activities which ensure an adequate supply of qualified professionals and paraprofessionals to provide vocational rehabilitation services statewide. These policies and procedures were developed in coordination with the State Rehabilitation Council.

#### **(a) Data system on personnel and personnel development.**

The USOR has developed and maintains a computerized record system for personnel needs, resources, and training. The computerized personnel needs data system provides annual analysis of:

##### **(1) Qualified personnel needs.**

- (A)** The number of personnel who are employed by the state agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;
- (B)** The number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and
- (C)** Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services in the state in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

##### **(2) Personnel development.**

- (A)** A list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by type of program;
- (B)** The number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
- (C)** The number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

**(b) Plan for recruitment, preparation, and retention of qualified personnel.**

The computerized personnel record system assists staff to determine current and future need for qualified personnel based on the formula of one counselor and one-half time secretary for each 20, 000 individuals in the general population, as long as at a minimum, a 50/50 staff cost to case service budget ratio is maintained. Also considered in the analysis of personnel need is the number of current staff who will be eligible for retirement in the next five (5) year period.

**i. Annual Results:**

USOR estimates that 22,400 eligible individuals will be served during fiscal year 2008. USOR currently employs 118 Rehabilitation Counselors. During fiscal year 2008 the ratio of counselor to eligible consumers will be 1:189.83. USOR has plans to hire an additional three (3) Rehabilitation Counselors and two (2) secretaries during fiscal year 2008.

**ii. Five (5) Year Projections:**

Based on personnel estimates and performance over the last five (5) years, USOR projects the need for an average of thirty (30) new Rehabilitation Counselors per year for the next five (5) years due to staff turnover. This means that USOR will be recruiting, hiring, and training 150 new Rehabilitation Counselors over the next five (5) years.

**(c) Personnel standards.**

Policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards to ensure that USOR professional and paraprofessional personnel are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, include:

**(1) CSPD Standard**

The USOR establishes the following policy to ensure that professionals providing services are appropriately and adequately trained consistent with or prepared to meet the nationally recognized standard for certification that applies to the area in which such personnel are providing vocational rehabilitation services.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all Rehabilitation Counselors, Supervising Counselors, and District Directors employed by USOR meet the

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) standard required in law, federal regulations, and the state plan. This standard was designed to guarantee that Rehabilitation Counselors are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained to provide vocational rehabilitation services.

The USOR CSPD standard requires that those employees identified above meet one of the following criteria:

- 1) Hold national certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) .
- 2) Hold a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling.
- 3) Hold a Master's degree in a counseling field, plus gain five (5) years of experience as a Rehabilitation Counselor, to include twelve (12) months of supervision under a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC).

As of this date forty one (41) Rehabilitation Counselors within USOR are engaged in training in order to meet this standard. Seventy five (75) USOR Rehabilitation Counselors meet one of the three criteria listed above.

## **(2) Hiring Preference**

USOR supports the training of existing employees who do not meet the CSPD standard, and makes every effort to recruit and hire individuals who meet the USOR CSPD standard as outlined above. Hiring preference will be as follows:

- 1) Individuals who meet the USOR CSPD standard.
- 2) Individuals enrolled in a Commission on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited program to obtain a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling.
- 3) Individuals who hold a Master's degree in a counseling field.
- 4) Individuals who hold a Bachelor's degree in a related social service field such as counseling, psychology, social work, etc. and who have three or more years of counseling employment experience.
- 5) Other.

All new counselors receive a notification attached to their letter of hire indicating their CSPD standing and the requirements they must meet within their first year of hire, and subsequent five (5) years of hire to meet the standard. The letter is signed by the USOR Executive Director and must be signed by the prospective employee prior to acceptance of the position.

### **(3) Timelines**

All Rehabilitation Counselors who do not meet the standard as outlined above are required to meet the standard within five (5) years of their date of hire. Counselors who do not have a Master's degree in a counseling field upon hire will be required to enter a Master's program, and obtain the needed degree to meet the five (5) year deadline.

### **(4) Funding Priority**

While it is the intention of USOR to establish and maintain funding necessary to allow all employees to meet the CSPD requirements, exceptional and unforeseen circumstances may arise that prohibit such funding. Should funding become unavailable, the employee will be allowed an adjusted time frame to accomplish the standard when such funding becomes available.

USOR establishes priorities of funding for CSPD requirements as follows:

- 1) Priority One: Employees in a supervisory position and employees hired under the expectation of meeting the standard as indicated in their letter of hire.
- 2) Priority Two: All other employees.

### **(5) Educational Assistance Policy (CSPD)**

#### **1) Employees without Master's degrees in a counseling field:**

The graduate degree specific to Rehabilitation Counseling is preferred by USOR, and is considered to be directly related to the job requirements of a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. For this reason employees who choose to attend a CORE accredited Master's degree program will be eligible for 100% educational reimbursement of tuition and books. The CORE accredited program chosen must be eligible to grant full RSA scholarship funding to offset the costs of tuition, fees, and books. All employees attending these programs must apply for the RSA scholarship. In the rare instance where an approved graduate program may have exhausted all available scholarship monies for a given semester, employees will be eligible to request from USOR 100% reimbursement of tuition, fees, and books. Reimbursement requests must be submitted prior to the beginning of each semester. These requests must be accompanied by a letter of scholarship denial

which states that the reason for such denial was due to lack of available funding from the approved graduate program. Employees completing required internship and practicum experience from a CORE accredited program will be accommodated by USOR at the employee's request.

Those employee's who choose to attend a Master's degree program in a counseling field other than a CORE accredited program will be eligible for standard educational reimbursement of 50% of tuition, fees, and books, up to the rate of a comparable public program. Comparable public programs are benchmarked against those found at the University of Utah. All such coursework must be directly related to the employee's job requirements. Employees must be accepted and matriculated in a graduate program in a related counseling discipline. Such counseling degree programs should include one graduate course with a primary focus in the theories and techniques of counseling, and two to four graduate courses with a primary focus in the areas of vocational assessment, occupational information and/or job placement, medical and/or psychological aspects of disability or community resources, and delivery of rehabilitation services.

Employees not in a CORE accredited program are required to meet the internship and practicum experiences required by their institution, which may require time away from the job that must be covered by personal leave time from the agency.

All requests for USOR educational benefits will be considered contingent upon available funding and employees will be notified of approval prior to enrollment for each semester. All related educational expenses and time required to complete any graduate program will be the responsibility of the employee.

## **2) Employees with Master's degrees in a counseling field:**

Employees who hold a Master's degree in a related counseling field will be considered to have met the CSPD standard if the official transcript includes a class in, or consistent with the theories and techniques of counseling, after five (5) years of continuous work experience with USOR, twelve (12) months of which must include supervision by a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC). Some employees who hold a Master's degree in a field related to Rehabilitation Counseling may choose to take additional graduate level classes in order to reduce the work experience needed to apply for national certification. As those classes would not be at the direction of

the agency under this policy, educational benefits outlined in the Human Resources Guide would apply. This could include a 50% reimbursement of the cost of those classes.

### **3) Employees who meet CSPD standards:**

In some cases employees who currently meet the CSPD standard may choose to pursue an additional advanced degree program. Educational benefits outlined in the Human Resources Guide will apply in these instances.

**CSPD Pay Increase:** Counseling staff who obtain the CRC certification will be refunded 50% of the test fee, and will receive a 5.5% selective salary increase to offset the costs of maintaining the certification (unless they are in longevity). Individuals in longevity who obtain certification will receive a one time bonus. Counselors must continue to maintain CRC certification or they will lose the salary increase.

**CSPD Performance Plan Requirements:** Staff employed as Rehabilitation Counselors, Supervising Counselors, and District Directors must meet the CSPD standards. New employees hired who do not meet the standard will have a section added to their USOR Performance Plan with a heading of “Professional Development.” This section includes an attachment detailing the outline of a plan which will enable the employee to meet the CSPD guideline within the five (5) year from hire deadline.

Recruitment and retention of employees who meet the CSPD standard is a primary goal of USOR and is an ongoing process. Each new counselor hired must complete a USOR Qualification of Personnel Standard form. For those staff who meet the standard at the time of their hire and for those who will meet the standard within five (5) years of hire with additional work experience alone (those hired with Master’s degrees in a counseling field), no additional documentation is required. For those counselors who need additional education in order to meet the standard, sections will be added to their performance plans with the heading of Professional Development. These sections must include a plan describing how the counselor will meet the standard, by obtaining the required Master’s degree, within five (5) years of the date of hire. These plans shall be submitted to the USOR Training Coordinator with the USOR Qualification of Personnel Standard form within thirty (30) days of hire, and must be signed by the employee, the supervisor, and the District Director. Minimum requirements for the first year of the plan for those staff who do not

hold a Master's degree in a counseling field will include acceptance into a graduate program and satisfactory completion of two (2) semester hours of coursework required in the approved program. Satisfactory completion means courses are completed in a timely manner at a performance level to meet the graduate school requirements. Progress sufficient to meet the CSPD plan requirements will be monitored in each subsequent year as set forth in the employee's Performance Plan.

The Performance Plan will be reviewed as will be reviewed as required by the supervisor. If an employee has not satisfactorily completed all activities outlined for the year of review, they will receive an unsatisfactory rating in the Professional Development section and be placed on corrective action. A corrective action plan will be written with short term goals established to remediate the lack of progress toward their CSPD plan. The corrective action plan will establish three (3) and six (6) month reviews. If the corrective action is not successful, disciplinary action will result which may include termination based upon non-compliance with USOR agency policy. Normal supervisory review procedures will apply and be available to the employee. New employees who do not make the outlined progress in the first year of probationary status will be terminated from the agency in probationary status with no recourse for the employee.

**(d) Staff development.**

The USOR has established policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that all personnel receive appropriate and adequate training. This narrative describes the following:

- (1) The USOR Human Resource Development Program provides for attendance at workshops, conferences, formal course work at institutions of higher education, as well as agency developed and conducted training sessions. Training is offered in the areas of counseling; informed choice; medical, psychological, and vocational assessment; assistive technology; current research and issues; culturally sensitive practices; job placement and development; ethics; WIA and the Rehabilitation Act; as well as other topics relevant to Rehabilitation Counselors. The USOR provides monthly in-service trainings via satellite broadcasts to sites around Utah, as well as by web-streaming training content. The USOR has consistently exceeded the required training hours required to maintain national certification.
- (2) The USOR has established procedures for the acquisition and dissemination to professionals and paraprofessionals significant knowledge from research and other sources. These procedures include providing training opportunities,

encouraging professional memberships in organizations which offer professional journals, as well as having a close relationship with the Utah State University Rehabilitation Counselor Education program, and the Region 8 RCEP.

**(e) Personnel to address individual communication needs.**

The USOR has worked to ensure the availability of personnel who are able to communicate in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability or in appropriate modes of communication with applicants or eligible individuals. The USOR has established Spanish speaking caseloads that are staffed by professionals who are fluent in Spanish. Additionally USOR has established a number of deaf and hard of hearing caseloads statewide that are staffed by professionals fluent in American Sign Language. These staff are tested prior to selection for these positions, and receive a pay increase for these skills. Additionally, the USOR operates under a state contract that provides additional interpretation services through a private company for all other languages.

**(f) Coordination of personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.**

The USOR has established procedures and activities to coordinate the comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. These include the following activities:

- 1) Maintain the cooperative agreement between the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation with the Utah State Office of Special Education for a project of systematic transition for Utah's youth with disabilities.
- 2) Provide cross systems training, advanced counselor training, medical aspects of disability training, and training on the Rehabilitation Act amendments of 1998.
- 3) Continued participation in the Utah State University Rehabilitation Counselor Education Program's Advisory Board.
- 4) Maintain cooperative agreements with all of Utah's local school districts and have a rehabilitation counselor trained in transition services assigned to each high school in the state.
- 5) Maintain membership on the Utah Special Education Consortium for Comprehensive System of Personnel Development under the IDEA.